

**What is claimed is:**

1. An isolated nucleic acid comprising any one of the following:
  - (a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 8;
  - (b) a nucleic acid sequence at least 90% identical to the nucleic acid sequence of (a) above;
  - (c) a nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide wherein the polypeptide has conservative amino acid substitutions to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 8; or
  - (d) a fragment of the nucleic acid sequence of (a), (b) or (c) above wherein the fragment comprises at least 20 nucleotides.
2. The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid is selected from the group consisting of DNA and RNA.
3. The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid comprises an open reading frame that encodes a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 8 or its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.
4. The nucleic acid of claim 1 wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO: 8.
5. The nucleic acid of claim 3 wherein said nucleic acid encodes a mature form of a polypeptide comprising an amino acid of SEQ ID NO: 8, a mutant or variant thereof.
6. The nucleic acid of claim 4 wherein said nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 8, a mutant or variant thereof.

7. An oligonucleotide sequence that is complementary to and hybridizes under stringent conditions with the nucleic acid of claim 1.
8. The oligonucleotide sequence of claim 7 which is complementary to at least a portion of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 7.
9. An isolated nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence complementary to at least a portion of a nucleic acid according to claim 3.
10. A vector comprising the nucleic acid of claim 1.
11. A cell comprising the vector of claim 10.
12. The cell of claim 11 wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell comprising the nucleic acid sequence which is SEQ ID NO: 7, its complement, or a mutant or variant thereof.
13. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the nucleic acid of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
14. A process for producing a polypeptide encoded by the nucleic acid of claim 1, said process comprising:
  - a) providing the cell of claim 11;
  - b) culturing said cell under conditions sufficient to express said polypeptide; and
  - c) recovering said polypeptide,thereby producing said polypeptide.
15. The process of claim 14 wherein said cell is a prokaryotic or eukaryotic cell.

16. A process for identifying a compound that binds the nucleic acid of claim 1, the process comprising:
  - a) contacting said nucleic acid with a compound; and
  - b) determining whether said compound binds said nucleic acid sequence.
17. A compound identified by the process of claim 16.

097743-04000